

# **INDIA TO-MORROW**



# INDIA TO-MORROW

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"At the expiration of ten years after the passing of the Government of India Act, 1919, 'a commission shall be appointed' for the purpose of enquiring into the working of the system of Government . . . . and the development of representative institutions in British India, . . . . and the commission shall report as to whether and to what extent it is desirable to establish the principle of responsible government, or to extend, modify or restrict the degree of responsible government then existing . . . ."

Govt of India Act (Section 84A).

**TO MY WIFE,  
WITHOUT WHOSE INSPIRATION  
THIS BOOK WOULD NOT HAVE  
BEEN WRITTEN**



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## **FOREWORD**



## FOREWORD

THIS book is the effort of one, who has never attained to high executive office in the service of the Crown, but who has counted himself rich in the multitude and catholicity of his friends.

Originality, either in virtue or in sin, is a two-edged sword, to be admired or condemned as we will, but for those who do not possess it, a readiness to absorb the ideas of others is not without its compensatory advantages. Some imperfect siftings of such ideas are to be found in this little book. It is an attempt to imprison in words fugitive thoughts, which are passing through many minds, in the hope that some friend may find in them a reflection of his own reflections and be willing in turn to influence others in like manner.

There is nothing constructive in the book. That must be left to greater minds, more intimately connected with the problem. But, even before the sower goes forth to sow, the humble ryot has a task to perform in preparing the ground—in ploughing out of existence the weeds that threaten the value of the crop to be. This book has no greater, as perhaps it could have no worthier, aim. It is written far away from the strife of tongues in the Imperial City, the thoughts, which it has attempted to express,

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beaten out to the music of the horse's hoofs in many a lonely ride across the plains of northern India, when the sun at eventide gilds even the dust into a trailing cloud of glory. But above all, it is written in a perfect faith that the so-called "Lost Dominion" can be regained on the more certain and lasting foundation of a common understanding and a common purpose.

K.D.A.

*September, .1927.*

# **THE PROBLEM**



## THE PROBLEM

As the time approaches for the appointment of the 1929 Commission, which is to put the whole constitution of India into the melting pot, thoughtful people in India and in England are endeavouring to see daylight through the mists of present doubts and uncertainties, to appraise the past and to peer ahead into the future. The mists are to some extent of our own making. Our differences are magnified by the conflict of political ideas and by that overstatement of every point of view, which is so characteristic of the political arena. The whole situation is one vast paradox and in our perplexities we find our refuge in shibboleths and slogans. We talk of "self-determination" without realizing that self-determination is a phrase and not a principle. We advocate provincial autonomy, but carefully refrain from defining what we mean.

India desires the appointment of a Commission that shall be both competent and impartial; competent by reason of the practical experience of its personnel in the problems to be handled; impartial by reason of the aloofness of its members from all participation in the events of the past. In other words, some demand a Commission that shall be thoroughly representative, though they know at heart that the final report would be swamped by

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dissenting minutes. Others insist on an impartial Commission, whose impartiality shall be emphasized by its entire ignorance of the problems it has to face. The constitution, which is to eventuate, must, say some, be final and as permanent in its rigidity as the permanent settlement of Bengal. The final goal must be reached in one bound, for transitional constitutions have proved a failure. A further series of reincarnations would be unwise, progress must cease, and India will have attained her political Nirvana. Moreover, the constitution must be an expression of the old traditions of Indian civilization untainted by any touch of Western civilization, and yet anything less than or different from the British Constitution is to be denounced as a whittling down of solemn undertakings.

In the mental confusion resulting from such conflicting thoughts, we start to frame our ideal constitution. We elaborate the details and ignore the real difficulties, or lightly assert that these are matters for future consideration. But as we glance at the clock, we find that time is moving on. The present is merging into the future. Tearing up our paper constitution, we feverishly begin again on our self-imposed labours. Some there are on both sides of the controversy, who appeal to the logic of theory, ignoring the far more potent logic of hard facts.

Some people in England would impose upon India a system of Government stamped with the hall-mark



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of perfect efficiency, though they have never suggested that Britain should hand over the government of her own country to any nation whose painstaking and methodical methods might be more theoretically perfect than her present practice of muddling through. Others, to whom the phrase "self-determination" has become a watchword, would repeat the experience of Russia and replace a bureaucracy by a town-bred oligarchy out of touch with the village life of a country, which, like Russia, is fundamentally agrarian.

"We claim the right to make mistakes." So said a great Indian, and he stated a great truth, but who are "we" and on whom will the consequences of our mistakes fall? The toad under the harrow may not appreciate our eloquent dissertations on the subject of contentment.

Another section of the English politicians would export to India our British constitution, neatly tied up in red tape, with the same confidence that a Staffordshire potter will export to India a standard English egg-cup in the hope that the diminutive Indian egg will not be lost in its vasty depths. These people might ponder over the remark made by a leading statesman of a certain European country, who blames England for all the troubles in Europe to-day. "If," he says, "you British did not possess an impossible constitution, and if you had not added to this error the crime of making it work, the other countries of Europe would

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not have attempted to copy you, to their own damnation."

Indian and English students of the problem have alike pointed out that the true policy in India is to build up from the villages, taking the village panchayat as the first, as it is even to-day, the truest representative institution in India, and working up through local boards and district councils to the Provincial Government and finally to the Central Legislature.

There are, at present, a series of detached local bodies, stretching from the panchayat to the Provincial Council, but there is no connecting link between them, nor is experience on a subordinate council a condition of election to a higher one. Such conditions do not obtain in England, though, as a matter of fact, many parliamentarians, who have done useful work behind the scenes in the House of Commons, have gained their early experience in local councils, and to men of this calibre the social good of the people must ever stand above the claims of political partisanship. In England the local councils are live institutions, attracting men of no less integrity and ability than the House of Commons itself. The Englishman loves the country and there is some truth in the statement, once made by an Indian friend of the writer, that England's greatness depends on her week-ends. There are obvious reasons why an English politician is able to spend his week-ends in the country, coming again in touch

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with Mother Earth and with those who till her soil and returning to the political arena with renewed strength and sympathy for his fellow men. In India the lure of the town and the difficulties of transport have created other conditions and a comparison between the way in which an Indian and an English politician spends his week-ends would probably indicate the reason why, as some of the Assembly representatives have averred, Monday in the Legislative Assembly at Delhi is always regarded by them as a trying and unsatisfactory day.

The local council in England is a live and healthy institution, whilst the local board in India, speaking generally, is almost moribund. A local squirearchy in India, living in the country districts and keenly interested in local public service, would create conditions rendering the rapid development of responsible government in India both possible and irresistible. Those, who would foster a spirit of public service, starting at the bottom with the village panchayat, are therefore right in principle and there are few who will combat the logic of the proposition ; but here again the logic of facts comes up against us. Does anyone imagine that the Indian politician is going to wait for several decades for political institutions to develop from such small beginnings, and to rest in the hope that after he has long passed to his rest, or should we rather say to his reward, the seed thus planted will have grown into the majestic oak of a British Constitution ? The

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Englishman, who plants an acorn, thereby demonstrates his love of his country and his desire that a posterity, in which he will have no lot, shall benefit by his gracious act. But trees grow rapidly in India, seldom attain a great height, are remarkable for the brilliance of their blossom and do not always make good timber. The banyan, it is true, throws its roots down from its branches, but admittedly the branch evolved from the main trunk.

• But, however logical it may be to build up democratic institutions from the village, the political history of England has told another tale. It was the Barons who wrested the Magna Carta from King John, the new industrial towns that wrested the power from the large landowners, and only by degrees has the spirit of democracy filtered down through the State from the top to the bottom of the social ladder. Other methods have been tried, such as in the French Revolution, and more recently, by the industrial workers in Russia. The results have not been such as to encourage experiments along these lines in India. It must be assumed that the ultimate end of all political institutions is to select those men, who are most capable of leading the country along the right lines at any particular stage in its political development, an assumption which postulates that the leaders must have sympathy with, and even share, in some degree, the predilections and prejudices of those they govern. The British in India are often accused of a lack of imagination, a defect which appears to be

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thought as heinous as would be a lack of efficiency or integrity, and which, it must be conceded, is sometimes responsible for unnecessary and trying complications. If there is any truth in this accusation, it alone would be a justification for the present policy of a closer association of Indians in the Government of the country.



## **THE CONSTITUTION OF THE COMMISSION**





## THE CONSTITUTION OF THE COMMISSION

At the present moment Indian opinion is showing a greater interest in the constitution of the 1929 Commission than in the great problems it will have to consider. Should that Commission consist entirely of members of the two Houses of Parliament at Westminster, on the principle that Parliament would prefer its own members to examine the working of the Indian Reforms since their inception and to suggest amendments ; or should it be truly representative of Indian opinion ? If the latter, are there any in India to-day, who can guarantee that, given a seat on the Commission, they will be able to carry the country with them in their findings ?

We are perhaps inclined to base too much on the value of a written constitution and to believe that if a constitution is perfect, the working of it and the administration must also be good. Surely this is an overstatement of the case, or rather an absolute fallacy. Written constitutions, though apparently considered inevitable in these latter days, have the defects of their own qualities. If too minutely set out, they prevent the natural processes of evolution, and progress only becomes possible by spasmodic

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jerk. There can be no greater difference than in the British Constitution between the principle and the practice. Almost any constitution would be impossible if the desire to co-operate were lacking—the British Constitution most of all.

Travelling along this line of thought, the solution might appear to rest in the second of our alternatives and an attempt should therefore be made to render the Commission truly representative. It is only when we consider the practical issues, that doubts begin to rise in our mind. What is our conception of the true functions of a representative? Is he to carry a rigid mandate from the community he represents, or is he to study the problem before him, and, with the greater knowledge he acquires during the proceedings, eventually to decide what his community, had it a like knowledge, would probably consider to be in the best interests both of itself and of the country at large? No Indian constituency has hitherto given such a full mandate to its representatives, either in the Legislature or in the various Commissions, which have been a characteristic of the last eight years. On the contrary, the powers of these representatives have been severely crippled by lack of confidence, a state of affairs in which the representatives themselves have been all too ready to acquiesce. All experience shows that in the atmosphere of the committee room many of our most cherished theories perish and that we can best serve the interests we represent by discarding what is bad

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and building on the good. But what chance have we of so doing, if every evening after our labours are done, we find at the door our leading constituents, waiting to strengthen us again for the deliberations of the morrow and to reclothe us in the fallacies we have shed during the discussions of the day? If we ourselves, being truly representative of the mental outlook of our constituency, are willing to acquiesce in any such situation, we shall naturally conclude our labours by presenting at the close a long dissenting minute, possibly written by others, but certainly in collaboration with them, in which we restate the one-sided view held by us before we heard a word of evidence. Can any recommendations as to the future government of India command the confidence of the people, if bred in such an atmosphere—a mere collection of conflicting minutes, out of which no constructive program can emerge? Which is better, a Commission of this nature, or one entirely ignorant of Indian conditions, endeavouring to plant in India the exotic herbage and verbiage of western political institutions?

Neither alternative seems to hold out any hope of success, nor would either find in the formal evidence, which is likely to be offered it, any adequate corrective for its own natural predilections. It will not be the first Commission in recent years compelled to frame its recommendations on the evidence which it has not received. Obviously the 1929 Commission offers a glorious opportunity for filling many official

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blue-books with political speeches. And there an end ?

So diverse are the communities and races in India that the problems may more rightly be termed international, than national, and perhaps in the methods of the League of Nations we may find some solution of these real and obvious difficulties. At several of the conferences at Geneva very substantial agreement has been reached along lines, which at first sight did not appear to offer any great prospect of success. Each nation is allowed to speak freely its own views and the result is a desultory conversation, which at first apparently seems to be leading nowhere, but, as it proceeds, certain principles begin to stand out and the *rapporteur* follows the discussion closely in order to watch for the first signs of something solid emerging out of the liquid discussions. He finally produces a draft which, if he is competent, embodies all these general principles and the natural conclusions to which they lead.

If the Royal Commission regards itself as a Heaven-sent mission of intellectual perfection, it will fail in its work, however good that work may be, for the findings will be unacceptable to India. India is seeking after something, however imperfect, to embody ideals such as she herself feels, but only dimly visualizes. If, on the other hand, the Commission regards itself as the *rapporteur*, endeavouring in the multitude of advisers to discover the ideas evolving in India's subconscious

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mind and to find out more perhaps by private conversation with her political leaders and others, than in the formal evidence of the council chamber, it may possibly be as successful as many of the *rapporteurs* have been at Geneva.

It may appear, at first sight, that we are stating here nothing more than what is regarded as the work of every Commission, but those who have had experience in such matters, will readily recognize a fundamental difference. The underlying principle in the ordinary Commission is that its members are to judge the issue; but the chief function of the *rapporteur* is to interpret the views of others and, if that is so, the Commission must consist of men, few in number, who will readily absorb new ideas without losing intellectual stability.

Everyone must sympathize with the Indian viewpoint, that a constitution imposed from without is unlikely to be effective, or to secure that degree of support within the country, which is so essential to its successful operation. On the other hand, a truly representative Commission, where such vital interests are concerned, would be unwieldy and, even if it were a possibility, could hardly consist of less than a score or two of members, whose varied conclusions would be of little value in arriving at any unanimous and acceptable scheme.

The only alternative appears to be the appointment of independent men of exceptional qualities,

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whose objective would be invite the co-operation of all who set the welfare of the country as a whole above their own sectional interests. In other words, the Commission can only hope to succeed if it invites and is able to obtain, perhaps more adequately, as has been suggested, by informal discussion than by formal evidence, the greatest possible assistance from the greatest number of thoughtful people. Judging by the expressed views of the politicians of all sides, any large measure of agreement would seem to be impossible. Those, however, who have been accustomed during the last few years to turn a sympathetic ear towards the natural aspirations of all classes in India, have probably come to the conclusion that agreement on certain general principles will not be so difficult as may appear to those who found their fears on the extravagant rhetoric of the political platform. The only hope of a successful issue may thus be in the appointment of a small and impartial Commission, which will regard its proper function to be one rather of reconciliation of apparently opposing views, than of the adumbration of judicial pronouncements. True statesmanship aims at the highest conceivable, but accepts the highest obtainable.

It might at first sight appear that the duties of a *rapporteur* are less onerous than those of a judge, but very little consideration is needed to convince us that the task of the *rapporteur* is immeasurably more difficult, requiring a far higher degree of capacity.

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As some recent examples have shown, it is not difficult with the aid of a pair of scissors and a few books on constitutional government to frame a hotch-potch constitution, duly decorated with Oriental embellishments.

To ascertain the real needs and feelings of India in the matter of responsible government and to express the findings in a practical form is a task worthy of the greatest brains of the Empire, applying themselves to their work with sympathy and understanding. It is, in fact, a proposal for that round table conference, which our Indian friends have so often advocated. The round table proposal, as generally put forward, is a thinly disguised variant of the so-called representative Commission. Its basic principle is that India welcomes the co-operation of Britain in the solution of her political problems and earnestly desires, as all Indian leaders have so often stated, the collaboration of all, of whatever race, who are willing and able to work for India's good. Unfortunately no round table is large enough to afford the necessary seating accommodation, nor would the conflicting voices be heard clearly across its polished surface. The round table theory is, however, the right one, and the conception here put forward is of many small round tables, at which the conversation shall be frank and informal, the *rapporteurs* moving freely from one to the other. The guests must not only be those who are bidden to the intellectual feast, but the *rapporteurs* must

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go into the hedges and highways to gain some insight into the view-point and needs of the man at the plough.

Such a suggestion, so far from meaning that anyone should be left off the Commission, has exactly the opposite conception. The design is to secure the maximum contribution from the greatest number; or, in other words, that all shall have a part in the findings in proportion to their ability to gauge the situation as evidenced in the events of the past eight years. The whole success of the Commission depends on the co-operation of the many and especially of those who have had first-hand experience of the working of the 1919 Constitution.



## **THE WORK OF THE COMMISSION**



## THE WORK OF THE COMMISSION

THE actual terms of reference of the Royal Commission as contemplated by the Act of 1919 are to enquire "into the working of the system of Government, the growth of education and the development of representative institutions in British India, and matters connected therewith," and to "report as to whether it is desirable to establish the principles of responsible government, or to extend, modify or restrict the degree of responsible government then existing."

The writer is one of those, who believe that whether or not western democratic institutions are most suited to the Indian environment, India does definitely desire and will be satisfied with nothing less than, or different from, the general western conception of representative government, accepting that conception in its broader aspects.

A less imitative conception of governmental institutions may come in time, but it must come from within and not from without. It is one of the paradoxes of the situation that the Indian politician wants to reproduce, whilst at the same time decrying, the constitutional models of the West. Many Englishmen, on the other hand, though proud of their own system, desire India to accept something

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entirely different and professedly Oriental, of the form of which they shall be the judges.

In a moment of frankness, an Indian friend remarked to the writer that India would, of course, ask for twice as much as she expected to receive. Nothing would be more fatal, for the Commission might give her the half she did not want and omit the half at which she was aiming. Nor would such an attitude be logically sound. There is surely no desire on the part of Britain that India should secure the irreducible minimum, but rather the absolute maximum, on which a fresh start can safely be made, with the door open to further advancement by internal growth, as India progresses in political foresight and efficiency. It is surely therefore the duty, as it is in the interests of all, that every thoughtful man, both in and outside the Services, should weigh up, in each separate aspect of the question, the actualities of the problem, and should point out exactly in what direction and how far, in his opinion, constitutional advance can safely be made. With such co-operation there is little doubt that the success of the Commission would be assured; without it, there can be no hope of anything but the incubation of another imperfect and transitional device.

Probably all will agree that the chief defect of the 1919 Constitution was that in many directions it stimulated a sense of irresponsibility, rather than a sense of responsibility. In this connection all must

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agree also, that, where responsibility is to be assumed, it must be real responsibility for good or evil, subject only to the safeguards recognized in all modern constitutions. Where this is impossible, owing to circumstances beyond our present control, a pseudo-responsibility is undesirable, as inevitably stimulating agitation and preventing the smooth working of the political and administrative machinery. The implication of such a statement is serious, for it postulates that, whilst in some directions there may be very considerable advance, in others, experiments, which have proved injurious, may have to be relegated to the lumber of the past. The result may well be, as it ought to be, a more intensive cultivation of representative institutions, even though the area cultivated may be less diffuse. This is a hard saying, but many in India have asserted that the 1919 Reforms were a sham, and these critics should not cavil if, owing to the present conditions in India, a more healthy plant is raised on a slightly more circumscribed scale. Whether the fault lies with the Reform Scheme, or the way in which it has developed, few will deny that the experience of the past eight years has not been uniformly encouraging and that in certain directions, ominous signs of fungoid growth have menaced the healthful vigour of the new exotic.

One objective, which the Commission should steadily set before itself, is the removal, so far as possible, of the idea, so generally formulated and so

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vehemently denounced by many Indian leaders, that political progress in India depends more on the goodwill of England than on the march of events in India. If this objective be granted, we are almost inevitably carried one step further to the corollary that the Commission must endeavour to indicate the final course, rather than to devise fresh transitional constitutions. The future development of responsible government in India should thereafter depend, in great measure, on evolution within the country itself.

Much in the present constitution has militated against co-operation between the various communities of India, a subject which is discussed in another chapter. To some extent the 1919 Constitution has fostered communal rivalry, which is difficult to avoid, when greater powers are being given to the representatives of the people with an inevitable scramble for the spoils of office. It is, however, desirable to keep this danger in mind and to fix a course which shall steer clear of obvious whirlpools.

There does not seem to be anything inherently unsound in the proposition that each province should be allowed to adjust its own constitution to its particular needs. The only condition required to safeguard minorities is that they should be consenting parties to any change. In other words, unanimity, or practically unanimity, should be the *sine qua non* of further development in any individual provincial

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constitution. The politicians would then cease to press the British Parliament for greater powers and would address their attention to the conversion of their fellow politicians to their own viewpoint. It may be a long process, for confidence in each other has been rudely shaken amongst the various communities of India, and minorities will be reconciled to constitutional changes by experience rather than by persuasion. The British Parliament failed completely to reconcile the political viewpoints of Northern and Southern Ireland, but there is a strong movement in Ireland beneath the surface to accomplish by the goodwill of both sides a union, which could not be imposed from without. Neither Ulster nor the Irish Free State is happy under the present constitutional cleavage and thoughtful men of both parties are beginning to recognize that their own prosperity depends on reunion. There are few students of what is going on in Ireland to-day, who do not discern economic and political forces at work which must ultimately and inevitably tend towards a reunited Ireland, united in a spirit of co-operation, absent for so many centuries from that distressful country.

Such an evolution is not impossible in the provinces of India. If the Commission could change the present goal of All-Indian political agitation from that of wresting fresh concessions from the British Parliament, into that better goal of constitutional advance by the reconciliation of all parties

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within the province, it would have performed a great work. It would be the first step towards transforming the Indian politician into the Indian statesman. Minorities can have no grievance, if constitutional changes depend on general acquiescence. Ten years ago this solution might have seemed a fanciful proposition, for the non-official European community (by which awful designation some really nice Englishmen, Scotchmen and Irishmen in India are technically known) constitutes one of the strongest minorities, until recently criticized as firmly adhesive to the *status quo*. This is not so to-day. Times have changed, and India during the last eight years has had ample proof that she can rely upon the co-operation of the European community, who are sometimes called "birds of passage," but who in fact give the whole period of their working life to India. This community has always been prominent in India in every social work and since 1919 has made good in the political life of the country. If it remains conservative and prone to consolidate at every step before agreeing to further advance, its viewpoint has changed since 1919 more markedly than that of any other community. It played a great part in obtaining for India fiscal autonomy. It has co-operated to secure retrenchment and to create parliamentary conventions within the new councils, nor has it ever withheld its support from any Indian, who has taken office with the determination to make good and to fight against those grave dangers, which



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are inherent in all parliamentary forms of Government and to which in certain directions, the family and caste system renders India peculiarly liable. To set before India a goal of reconciliation, rather than of agitation, is therefore an end which the Royal Commission should keep steadily in view.



# **THE COMMUNAL QUESTION**



## THE COMMUNAL QUESTION

As the author of *The Third British Empire* has well written: "The race question, stirring as it does some of the most elemental of human passions, is the most urgent problem of our time. It cannot be evaded. It cannot be glossed over with fine phrases. It must be faced in all its unpleasantness—or the consequences of neglecting it will be a thousand times more unpleasant. . . . We would testify to all the world that our first and most pressing pre-occupation is to devise a satisfactory adjustment, upon a basis of mutual self-respect, of all the difficult, delicate, complex, and far-reaching problems involved by the contact of races in the modern world. If we do not take up this task, no other power will dare to do so. The peace of the world depends upon the moral courage of Britain."

These words were written in a different connection, but they are pregnant with meaning, when applied to the conditions and problems we are considering in this chapter, for one of the most difficult problems which the Royal Commission will have to face is the Communal Question. As Lord Ronaldshay has written, "The existence of seventy million Moslems in India is the most formidable obstacle in the way of those whose battle cry is

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‘India a Nation!’” Not one of those seventy million has a Hindu relative and in education it is a well-known fact that, in the mass, they lag far behind their Hindu fellow subjects. But this isolation does not apply only to the Moslems. There are the Sikhs in the north-west, the races of aboriginal stock in the middle and the south of India, the Anglo-Indians in a minority everywhere and the British residents in a like position. When we isolate the predominating masses of the Hindu population, we find difficulties hardly less acute. There is the Brahman versus non-Brahman controversy in Madras, and throughout all India there are the various castes of Hinduism, between which there can be no inter-marriage.

A reference to Ireland has been made in the previous chapter. The analogy is often made and is obvious, but without many qualifications it is dangerous and misleading. In regard to the aspect of the question now under discussion there are fundamental differences. In Ireland the two communities are socially and educationally on about the same level; inter-marriage, though rare, has moderated asperities and there are geographical divisions between the main bodies of the two religions. On an altogether different soil India desires to plant the seeds of democracy and to declare that politically all men are equal, while socially some are superior to others and amongst the latter nearly a fifth of the population are designated

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as untouchables. If any real attempt at representative government is to be made under such circumstances, it can only be by the most careful adjustment of conflicting interests, nor can any workable scheme be characterized primarily by its logic. However much we dislike the admission, any possible solution can only be based on expediency and opportunism. Nothing is to be gained by glossing over the difficulties that here face us. They are admitted on all sides and it is an obvious fact that they have become greater during the last ten years.

It is asserted that the Reform Scheme and a system of communal electorates have tended to intensify caste, communal and racial antagonisms. The greater participation of Indians in the administration of the country must necessarily create in the minds of each community a desire for an adequate or preponderating share in the Government services and especially is this true of India, where, unlike most countries of Europe, Government Service is regarded as one of the chief avenues of employment for the educated classes.

We are, however, discussing here the political aspect of the question and will deal with the services in a later chapter. However much the fact may be deplored, it is now generally recognized that, for many years to come, communal electorates will be inevitable. The Moslem community, to mention only one of the many minorities, is thoroughly alarmed at the prospect of being placed in a

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permanent political minority. To perpetuate communal electorates, without further intensifying communal antagonisms, is a problem which will tax the statesmanship of the Commission to the utmost. Religious differences have ever been the cause of the greatest antagonisms and the deeper the religious feeling the more easily have passions been inflamed. Not only is India deeply and fiercely religious, but she has not yet developed, in any marked degree, a trans-communal desire for the intellectual, social and physical improvement of her people as a whole. There are few common platforms on which all races can meet. It has been the experience of other nations, and England and Ireland are both examples, that religious controversy passes, though slowly, from the arena of politics, when a nation begins to occupy itself more and more with social problems common to all, irrespective of their religious opinions. Plague, pestilence and famine, ignorance and vice, show no religious bias when they stalk through the land. When a nation turns against these as its natural enemies, people of all creeds begin to work together. The change cannot come in a day and the lack of intermarriage in India between members of different races, castes and creeds, renders the cleavage more pronounced. There can, however, be no question of the ultimate goal at which we should aim, the building up of a body politic based on co-operation against the common evils that beset us.



## THE COMMUNAL QUESTION

Co-operation cannot be enforced by law, but communal differences may be aggravated by unwise legislation, or by an unfortunate political system. As has been suggested, it is a fairly obvious fact that if a man is to appeal to a communal electorate, he will appeal with greater success if he emphasizes the communal point of view, or, in other words, if he appeals to his electorate as communalists rather than as citizens. Whilst the whole object of the writer is to be indicative rather than constructive, it might be useful to mention a suggestion, which has been made, and which, it is averred, has been tried out on a small scale with complete success. The communal electorates should remain, and each community should be permitted to select those members in whom it has the greatest confidence. These men should in turn become the candidates standing for election by a common electorate. Thus, if on a population or voting population basis, in any particular area, one Sikh and two Moslem candidates are to be elected, the two communities should vote in the first instance in communal electorates for the men of their choice. The two Sikhs and the four Moslem candidates at the head of their respective polls, would then become the six candidates standing for election to the three vacancies by a common electorate, the Sikh and the two Moslems who stood above their respective co-religionists, being declared elected.

Readers may visualize for themselves, not without

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some quiet amusement, the position in which candidates would be placed if this principle were applied in election to the legislatures. A candidate must prove himself a typical and popular member of his own community, in order to gain the right to stand at the second election, but in the second election he has also to prove to members of another community that he is more desirable, from their standpoint, than any other of his own confraternity. It is, after all, a sound principle that the man, who has the truest interests of his own community at heart, will make the best representative of the people in a popular Assembly, just as the boy, who shouts loudest for his side in a house match, will cheer loudest for his school.

The Royal Commission will also have to explore how far sectional election is applicable to Indian conditions. The old Guild system in England was not without its merits. A man's right to a voice in public affairs was not inherent in his manhood, but in his usefulness to society at large, or, in other words, as a consequence of his activity in some trade or profession. It is a system that has been tried fairly extensively in India in the past, and it is for the Commission to decide how far it has been successful and whether that particular policy should be continued, enlarged or contracted.

## **THE SERVICES**



## THE SERVICES

THIS problem of the Services is one of the most difficult ones on which the Royal Commission will have to pronounce. Indianization has advanced greatly during the last few years and there are many Indians, who are doubtful whether much further advance is politic before communal tension has relaxed, or, in fact, whether India is not attempting too much in running two great experiments side by side. Indianization of the Services is an altogether different problem from that of the development of political institutions along the lines of a greater participation in the government of the country by the elected representatives of the people. Rather than risk almost inevitable shipwreck, India should decide which experiment she should try out first and there is little doubt what the answer will be, especially from the man behind the plough. It might have been in India's interests had she elected for an Indianized Bureaucracy, as more in accordance with her old traditions, but the decision has been taken and there can be no going back. What Indian political leaders have now to consider is, whether, at a time of great communal tension, when they desire to assume greater ministerial responsibilities, they can afford to have the

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administration staffed, in any larger measure than at present, by men, who, if not themselves partial to their own co-religionists, are at least held to be so by the people. It is bitter to admit, but useless to deny, that many districts in all parts of India are asking that the chief representative of the Crown in their locality shall be one who stands outside all communal controversies. This may alter in time, but, at present, the call from the districts is insistent and only grave trouble for the new ministers themselves is to be anticipated, if all their efforts are rendered nugatory by the intensification of communal distrust.

Up till quite recently the question of the Services has been almost identical with that of Indianization, but as Indianization has proceeded, another fundamental issue has come to the front, and is undoubtedly the main problem of the future. Are the Services to be constituted on a communal basis with members proportioned to the numbers of each community? It is a question on which the Moslems hold strong views, for, as Lord Ronaldshay points out, the backwardness of the Mohammedans, in respect to Western education, as compared with the Hindus, is notorious, and has acted as a serious handicap in the race for political power. The writer has come across instances where the decisive factor in the appointment of a Mohammedan to a certain post has been his religion and not his intellectual efficiency. The Britisher, appointed to any service in India, owes his position to the fact that, out of

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many candidates, he has proved himself to be the best of his race, quite apart from his religious tenets or from the part of the British Isles from which he comes. Such is the counsel of perfection and any other method of selection must be regarded by every thoughtful Indian as leading to the inevitable conclusion that Indianization of the Services will undermine efficiency, at the very time, when efficiency will be so essential and when every well-wisher of India is hoping that the altered character of the Services will not prove detrimental to the interests of the people. But here again logic cannot be our sole guide, nor can any system be successful, if vehemently opposed by seventy millions of the people. It is for the Royal Commission to ascertain how the natural and understandable ambitions of a large section of the people are to be satisfied, or at least sympathetically treated, without any undue lowering of the standard of selection.

It is to be hoped that the present pressure of Indians towards the Services will slowly relax, and that the educated classes will turn their attention more and more to industry, commerce and the learned professions. In England, government service is regarded as only one, not the most desirable, of the many careers open to its citizens, but in India far more graduates are being turned out than can be absorbed into the new social system. Moreover, the standard of the Indian universities leaves much to be

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desired from many points of view and few educated Indians regard their paternal duty as having been adequately fulfilled unless their sons have graduated under the more strenuous and efficient curriculum of a British or foreign university. It is only necessary to compare the number of graduates turned out in a single year from a single university with the number of posts under the Crown in India to realize that further Indianization can accomplish practically nothing towards absorbing any large portion of these aspirants to public work.

In regard to the appointment of the Services, India has open to it the two alternatives of England and America, and unfortunately developments in recent years have tended rather along American lines. Nepotism, which is regarded as a crime in England, makes a strong appeal to some of the finer attributes of the Hindu family and caste relationships. More than one Indian minister will admit in private that the right of patronage, which he so valued when he took office, has proved his undoing and that for every friend he has placated in the exercise of his patronage, he has antagonized ninety-nine others. Probably nothing has done more to cramp the powers of a minister and led to his downfall after a few months of office, when otherwise he would have remained in popular favour and made good. The only remedy seems to lie in the transfer of all right of appointment to a strong and impartial public services commission.



## THE SERVICES

When the British Civil Servants fought for security of tenure and for the right both to retain their posts and to advancement, so long as they did their duty honestly and efficiently, they were establishing a principle that is of even greater importance to their Indian fellow-servants and, in this matter, the interests of the whole Service and the true interests of the country are one. Unfortunately, comparisons with the English system are misleading, for in England principle and practice are at variance. A tradition has been built up in England that changing ministries shall leave the Civil Service unaffected and that, except in very rare instances, the minister shall accept the secretariat as he finds it. The swing of the pendulum in England is slow and a very efficient secretariat is not constantly disquieted by changes of Government nor by the personal whims of changing ministers. It will probably take years to build up the same traditions in India, and it is in the interests of ministers themselves that all in the Services, of whatever race or religion, shall have a feeling of security, so essential if they are to apply their undivided attention to the loyal and adequate discharge of their great responsibilities. It may be long before India settles down to form definite political parties. At the last election a score of different labels were assumed by as many parties and it was impossible for the student of politics to frame any conception as to what the various labels represented. We must, therefore,

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look for constant ministerial changes as in France, and, if this be an inevitable stage in India's political evolution, it must be the care of the Royal Commission to see that through all these changes the efficiency of the Services remains unimpaired.

# **THE INDIAN STATES**



## THE INDIAN STATES

THE Government of India Act of 1919 laid down a constitution for British India. The Indian States form no part of British India and remained outside its purview. The 1929 Commission is to be appointed to examine into the working of the system of government brought into being by that Act. It is difficult, therefore, to see how the Commission, without special parliamentary sanction, can extend its enquiries into the relations at present existing between the Indian States and the form of government now functioning in British India.

To those who understand the present position in India, no apology is, however, needed for including in this short book some reference to what is at the back of all men's thoughts and so often on the tip of many men's tongues.

A conventional beginning to any article on the Indian States must repeat the fact, still hardly recognized in England, that a third of India is ruled by Indian chiefs, ranging from potentates, holding sway over vast areas, down to small chieftans, whose powers and size of territory are hardly distinguishable from those of the great landowners of England. Up till quite recently the difficult problem of fitting the Indian States into any political system applicable to

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British India, has been tacitly ignored by the Indian politicians, and on the other hand, emphasized to the full by those, who have perhaps more fully recognized the difficulties of the situation. During the last few years, however, the question has come into greater prominence and a considerable quantity of literature has been collected, much of which might, without any serious loss, be consigned to the waste paper basket.

The doctrine of self-determination, a phrase which is used to imply so much in connection with the constitutional progress of British India, is often denied to the Indian States by the very people who find in it, like in all slogans, a substitute for clear and definite thinking. The Indian chiefs hold their treaties, none of them in identical terms, with the British Crown, whose representative in India is the Viceroy, and the selected representatives of British India have therefore exactly the same right, and no more, to interfere with the Indian States, as France has to interfere with the Government of Switzerland. That does not mean that British India and its people can remain unaffected by what goes on in these scattered and independent territories. It does mean, however, that, as in the case of neighbours like France and Switzerland, there are many combined problems to face which require most careful and tactful handling, without any expression of impatience or lack of consideration for the rights of others. There are two sides to every question and,

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as is well-known, political developments in British India and the freedom of the press, though that freedom has nominally been curtailed in this particular direction, have contributed largely to the difficulties of the Indian rulers. India has always taken kindly to personal rule, and many regret that the growth of democratic institutions must inevitably, though slowly, diminish the prestige of the District Officer in British India. Exceptions only prove the rule and in their loyalty to the Sovereign the mass of Indians have found an outlet for their innate love of a personal chief, which is comparable with and hardly exceeded by the loyalty shown by the colonies.

It is a healthy sign when the Indian chiefs themselves are beginning to review the situation, and the adoption by India of her new fiscal policy raises the question in a somewhat acute form. The protective measures so far adopted by the Central Legislature, on the advice of the Tariff Board, and the indirect protection generally afforded by enhanced revenue duties have probably benefited the Indian States as much as they have benefited any individual province. Be that as it may, the fact remains that the policy is decided by the representative institutions of British India without reference to the opinions of the Indian States, though the latter have been free to give evidence before the Tariff Board, and the fact also remains that the revenue and protective duties pass directly into the budget of the Indian Exchequer. The latter grievance from the point of view of the

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Indian States is perhaps more imaginary than real, when an analysis is made of the uses to which the finances of the Central Government are devoted. The defence of India from foreign aggression is, for instance, as much the vital concern of the Indian States as of any province in British territory and, if it is suggested that some of the Indian States maintain State troops available for Imperial service, that is a matter that lies between them and the Crown. It must not be forgotten that, apart from her long and difficult land frontier, India has also many thousand miles of coastline to protect. She pays practically nothing towards the cost of the British Navy and it is obvious to every student of recent events, that India stood to lose as much as, if not more than, any other part of the British Empire, had the result of the Great War been different.

The problem of the Indian States cannot be dissociated from the problem of the Central Government. It is all to the good that the Indian chiefs are recognizing this essential fact and in several instances have realized that the creation of representative institutions on their borders inevitably postulates some advance along similar lines within their own domains. It is largely a matter for themselves to determine whether, alongside their own treaties with the Crown, each embodying the recognition of their territorial rights, it would not suit them to enter into agreements with the Indian



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Government, such as will give them a more effective voice in matters affecting India as a whole. The Indian States are not all similarly situated and are not likely to arrive simultaneously at similar conclusions.

It is not merely that the rest of India must inevitably decline to stand still, but will continue to advance along lines which must inevitably have repercussions on the political situation in the Indian States. It is a much wider issue. Few recognize that all government is becoming more and more international in character. The Washington Agreement on labour questions and the recent World Economic Conference at Geneva, are only two instances to illustrate that evolution is proceeding in international affairs on lines very similar to those on which the British Imperial Conference has been working.

The Indian States are an integral part of India, just as India and her colonies are an integral part of the British Empire, and just as again the British Empire is an integral part of the League of Nations. This does not imply that these various integral parts must lose their identity in the whole, as the dewdrop in the sea; for recent world developments have given the smaller states guarantees of their integrity such as they had hitherto lacked. The problem of the Indian States appears therefore to be bound up with a recognition of the trend of world movements. It would be futile and dangerous to anticipate these

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movements and to force on any unwilling party, what may seem to be an inevitable and ultimate solution of the question. The task of the Royal Commission would, therefore, seem to be confined to the creation of the necessary channels along which this evolution may proceed without any immediate or violent disturbance of existing conditions.

## **THE PROVINCIAL COUNCILS**



## THE PROVINCIAL COUNCILS

THE problem of the Provincial Councils is not so difficult as that of the Central Government. The Royal Commission will, however, find many and varied knotty points to settle, beginning with the question whether the Provincial boundaries are to remain as at present. The functions of the Provincial Government are largely those of the English County Council and they should therefore be designed to attract men of similar qualities and inclinations. The introduction of political bias into the Town and County Councils in England has never been attempted without lowering the tone of these bodies. The members have usually, it is true, got in on a political platform, but fortunately there has been a tendency to hang up their politics with their hats and umbrellas in the cloakroom.

The present functions of the Provincial Councils, dealing with education, sanitation, roads, local self-government, and law and order, belong fundamentally rather to the sphere of social than of political activity. The efficiency of the Councils has suffered somewhat in that their scope of work and the area of their operations has been too large for the more personal touch of County Council administration, and too small and detailed for a

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parliamentary institution. The Royal Commission can hardly be expected to come to any decision as to the powers to be entrusted to the new councils until it has found some common ground as to the area and scope of Provincial Government. Provincial Autonomy is one of those indefinite phrases which may mean nothing or anything, depending on the nature of the Provincial subjects over which autonomy is to be granted. There could, of course, be no such thing as Provincial Autonomy in its widest sense without setting up each province as a separate and independent state.

There is, for example, the question of the police. In England the present system is to place the police under the administration of the local authority, but it has not worked altogether efficiently and economically. Its drawbacks were reported to be felt during the General Strike of 1926, when the lack of unification of the Force largely increased the difficulties of those responsible in that emergency for the maintenance of order. If the present police system has not worked perfectly in England and still more imperfectly in the U.S.A., the Royal Commission may well consider whether India should continue to follow an example which has not been without some serious defects.

The whole question of police administration is a difficult and delicate one. It is customary for the politician in India to rail against the police and to hold them up as oppressors of the poor, but

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when a reduction of police *thanas* has been suggested, there is an immediate outcry against any such action, whilst the fortunate districts, hitherto outside immediate police oppression, are constantly petitioning to be brought within the oppressive fold. Local knowledge is of assistance to the police in maintaining order and in the detection of crime, but it has its disadvantages, and, when communal trouble arises, a police officer is required, who will not only be fearless and impartial in the performance of his duty, but who will be given credit by the populace for such impartiality, a credit seldom accorded by the masses to any but an English police officer of the superior service.

There is much to be said for an Imperially administered Police Service. Apart from its intrinsic merits, it would certainly give confidence to many minorities and induce them to support a fuller measure of Provincial Autonomy. It would, of course, raise delicate questions affecting the relationships between the Provinces and the Central Government, such as already exist on the military side in the maintenance of internal order. The whole question of the police and the methods of its administration is one which the Royal Commission will be better able to solve, if those Indians, who are ready to lend their counsel, will frankly realize the difficulties and dangers surrounding the problem and will put forward solutions which are practically, even more than politically, sound.

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. Turning to the subject of Dyarchy, this unique experiment has had less friends even than it might be said to have deserved. Few voices are likely to be raised in its defence, though when it passes, as in its present form it must, we should not forget that it has worked without general and absolute failure in a transitional period of exceptional difficulty. There are some, of course, who will delight in the paradox that it has only functioned successfully in those provinces where it has not been worked. Its educational value has been great and perhaps greatest where it has taught us what to avoid. Those who condemn it, so unreservedly and not unjustly, have now the difficult task thrust upon them of pointing out a better way. Is there any other bridge possible between bureaucracy and democracy ?

The fundamental difficulty of dyarchy has been the lack of corporate responsibility, not only between the members and the ministers, but also between the various ministers themselves. It is certain, as the experiments of the last few years have proved, that any advance in the constitution must inevitably increase the power and prestige of the Governor ; if not *de jure*, certainly *de facto*. Whether or not the Royal Commission will formulate any scheme, in which he shall remain head of a ministerial cabinet, it is necessary that ministers must be co-ordinated under one of their own number, on whose recommendation they shall have been appointed and with whose policy they are in agreement.



## THE PROVINCIAL COUNCILS

What place, other than that assigned to the Civil Service in England, can the Indian Civil Service occupy in such a Government ? There may be some intermediate solution, but it has not yet been suggested. The proper function of a Civil Service is to keep the administrative machinery working smoothly under changing Governments, and to assist the Government of the day in coming to a decision as to the best methods of carrying out any policy to which it is pledged. Ministers are inclined to chafe, when the Secretariat suggests practical and financial difficulties in the way of somewhat grandiose schemes, and it is perhaps a pity that every minister before his appointment is not able to pay a visit to London in order to gain some insight into the relationship between the Cabinet and the Secretariat, to the smooth working of which, Conservative, Liberal and Labour Cabinets have alike borne testimony.

Any change along the lines indicated, which is only mentioned as the direction in which much Indian thought is trending, immediately raises the important question whether a second Chamber is desirable and could be so constituted as to form an independent, but not wilfully obstructionist, revising body. It has been suggested in an earlier chapter that the Provincial Legislatures might be allowed to amend their constitution from time to time under a properly safeguarded vote, which should ensure the acquiescence of all minorities. Under such circumstances, the creation of a second Chamber, if found

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desirable, need cause no alarm, for its powers and constitution could be adjusted periodically in order to ensure the proper discharge of its legitimate functions. For the same reason, any safeguards, required by any particular minority, may well be sympathetically considered by the Royal Commission in the expectation that if confidence be restored and the safeguards be proved, at some near or distant date, to be unnecessary, it will be within the competence of the Provincial Legislature to amend its constitution accordingly by general consent. There must obviously be some reason for the distrust of a majority by a minority and the disappearance of that distrust probably furnishes the best evidence, either that a majority is worthy of confidence, or that horizontal dividing lines have taken the place of vertical.

Mention has been made above of financial difficulties standing in the way of social policies. As an *obiter dictum*, it may be suggested that ministers will never succeed in commanding public support or in carrying out any practical reforms, until they take their courage in both hands and are prepared to tax the people for the people's good.

## **THE CENTRAL LEGISLATURE**



## THE CENTRAL LEGISLATURE

It is in the Central Government that the Royal Commission will encounter the greatest perplexities of its task. The difficulties are no longer ignored or belittled. The two problems of fitting the Indian States and the British Army into any representative system loom large. Recognition of the first difficulty is evidenced by a note of irritation, which has characterized the recent utterances of some of the politicians in their references to Indian States. Indianization of the Army is proposed as a remedy for the second difficulty. The problem of the Indian States has already been dealt with in a separate chapter.

The army problem is even less easy of solution. So long as Britain lends India an army, both for the defence of the frontiers and as the ultimate arbiter of internal order, the conditions, under which that army serves and may be employed, must be laid down by the British Government and its military advisers. Eventual Indianization of the army may be a possible and desirable goal, but it must inevitably be a distant one, and, as must be obvious to all, its attainment cannot be visualized by the Royal Commission, which will have to face facts as it finds them. Whatever criticisms may rightly be levelled against the various systems of government during the last seventy years.

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it cannot be asserted with any truth that they have developed a military despotism or that the civil authorities and the councils have not been able to do much towards curbing every tendency towards extravagance in military expenditure. There are two dangers here, which require the earnest consideration of thoughtful men. There is the danger that any weakening, or, which is not the same thing, too pronounced Indianization of the Central Administration, may, under the present circumstances, remove a wholesome check on military power and expenditure. That check can, under present conditions, be exercised in India and through the Secretary of State, without producing a deadlock. It must, however, be recognized that the army authorities have a serious responsibility in regard to the employment and conditions of service of the troops in India and, should a deadlock occur, a civil administration, less in touch with Britain than the present one, might find itself in an invidious position. Complete Indianization of the army would not solve, but only aggravate, the danger so long as the governing classes in India remain separated racially and geographically from the martial classes. Frank recognition of these considerations forms the starting point for any useful and constructive proposal which may be put forward for the consideration of the Royal Commission.

It has been suggested in an earlier chapter that it is unwise to create irresponsibility masquerading

## THE CENTRAL LEGISLATURE

under the guise of responsibility. That the Legislative Assembly has functioned so well during the last eight years is greatly to the credit of all concerned and has demonstrated that, where there is a large measure of goodwill, a scheme theoretically impossible may be workable, at least for a time. It is, however, so unsound in principle, that few would look to it as the ultimate solution of the problems affecting the constitution of the Central Legislature and some sounder scheme must necessarily be evolved. Where responsibility is granted, it must, subject to the ordinary constitutional safeguards, be sufficiently complete to induce a corresponding sense of responsibility, or, in other words, must carry with it the right to make mistakes.

In visualizing any change in the Central Government, it is difficult to escape from the dilemma of dyarchy, and yet some escape must be found. A system of divided functions is logically more sound than one of divided responsibility. Power without responsibility, even the negative power of criticism, cannot be defended. The two should be given together or not at all. If, by reason of circumstances beyond our present control, certain powers cannot, at the moment, be given to a large legislative body, elected on a popular franchise and constantly swayed by the gusts of party passion, they may perhaps be reserved to a smaller and less widely representative body, modelled on the lines of the present Council of State. Possibly along such a line of exploration

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may eventually be discovered a safe and satisfactory way out of the impasse. However that may be, it is certain that the Royal Commission will find little analogy between the problems of the Provincial Legislatures and those of the Central Government and can learn little from the experience of other nations applicable to the special circumstances surrounding the central problems. There has, however, been sufficient experience in India itself during the past few years to indicate on what lines development is undesirable and what are the chief stumbling blocks.

The Royal Commission will also have its financial problems to face. The open sore of the Meston Settlement has now become a thing of the past, but, with its extinction, unfortunately, did not pass away those inequalities which it was designed to redress. The adjustment of the Central and Provincial finances followed upon lines hallowed by the practice of many countries, but it is an anomaly for the Central Government to draw so large a proportion of its financial resources from two of the provinces, one of which finds what should be one of its chief sources of revenue blocked by a permanent settlement. The Royal Commission will not have an enviable task in endeavouring to put equal pressure on the pockets of all concerned. But it cannot evade the issue and will find in the course of its work that inter-provincial questions of finance will compel investigation.



## **CONCLUSION**



## CONCLUSION

THE reader, who has had the patience to follow the writer thus far, may reasonably ask whither all this leads. The answer lies with him. An honest endeavour to state issues clearly does not bring us to a solution of our difficulties, but it may carry us a considerable distance along the road ; much further, in fact, than we have travelled hitherto.

In earlier chapters, principle and expediency have both been enlisted in the cause and the reader may feel that he has been left bewildered at the cross roads. Let him set his mind at rest. The path of principle is the path of safety. Those who elect to guide us must have clear vision and see far ahead in the right direction. Expediency comes into our calculations only when we begin to plan each step forward towards our distant goal. Many obstacles lie across our path, some may have to be surmounted, others circumvented. It may even be that we may have to retrace our steps at times before further advance can be made. But we shall court failure and rush headlong to disaster, if we wilfully follow the wrong road, just because the right one

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appears from where we stand to be strewn with boulders.

Danger and difficulties lie immediately ahead. The insidious temptation to strive for victory rather than for truth will lie in wait for us at every turn, but a Pyrrhic victory for any one race or community over another will only aggravate the present discontents.

The suspicion that the British Parliament will prove reactionary is, at present, warping the minds of many in India. Britain has dared greatly in the past, as in Canada and South Africa. She will do so again, and it is just for that very reason that India must wake up to the gravity of the situation. Courage and faith are great assets in any nation or individual; Britain possesses both, but unless these virtues are rightly directed, they carry with them the possibilities of disaster.

At this juncture, to demand the impossible, or to withhold the contribution of a fair and balanced judgment, is to prove unworthy of the moment. A bargaining spirit is the stock in trade of the political huckster. Three years ago the task before our statesmen seemed hopeless. The horizon is clearer to-day. India is becoming weary of futilities. She has learned much in the past eight years and she is in the mood to profit by what she has learned.

This book is one-sided, as is every book written about India. Neither the book nor the writer

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exists that could do justice to all the varied facets of the brightest jewel in the British Crown. Some thoughts on the political facet alone are here presented. The author may at least claim that he is conscious of the fact and is as ready as any critic to sound that note of warning. He has written for those who know India and its problems, recognizing that others will find it hard indeed to reconcile what is here written with much that has appeared in some recent and more ambitious works reminiscent of the "steel frame" school.

\* The steel frame of the British Empire is a phrase that rankles in the mind of India, and of all other nations of the world, as hard statements of unpleasant truths must always rankle. It would, however, be self-deception to deny that it stands to-day between order and chaos in India, as it has stood from 1914 onwards between the life and death of world civilization.

"India must acquire the democratic spirit of equality before her political leaders can be trusted, with responsibility. These leaders are at present unrepresentative." So many affirm as the inevitable corollary and their voices are rising higher as the problem of 1929 draws near. That the leaders are unrepresentative of the masses is, in a very real though partial sense, true. Let us not forget, however, that they have proved their capacity to influence these masses, and if it is not to be for good in a position of responsibility, then assuredly

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it must be for evil, as we well know, in an irresponsible rôle.

The truth is that our old idea of the fitness of things has been upset by modern conditions. The West did not give the East a Western civilization, evolved through many centuries, in homœopathic doses, a century's dose at a time. She has hurled the whole complicated structure in its unfinished state at a people more ready to absorb than to understand. It is too late to talk of orderly processes. The British steel frame stands out all too gaunt and naked and it is time that it was covered up. Work will have to continue on many floors simultaneously, both on those about which recent books have been written and on that with which we are now concerned. Hence our confusion of mind if we dwell on one floor alone or try to reconcile the progress on one with that on another. Forces of disorder are abroad in the world; we must build securely, but we cannot delay. The final structure is intended to blend all that is good in both East and West to the greater good not only of India, nor only of the British Empire, of which we all rightly aspire to be equal members, but also of a distracted and suspicious world.

And now the reader will be weary. So far we have travelled together, though not perhaps in complete agreement. Henceforth the pioneers must go ahead. Those who are not able or willing to assist should stand aside. Some, like the writer,

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whose work is nearing its end, must turn their thoughts towards home, but not without a hearty "God-speed" to the men who, with their faces towards the dawn, have the greatest opportunity of our generation before them. Pray Heaven may not fail through craven fear of being great.